



DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

-- People --

People come first in the work and goals of the House Democratic Caucus

-- Safety --

Creating safe and protected communities so families and businesses can rebuild

-- Housing --

Rebuilding and repairing houses so people can return home

-- Jobs, Economy, Business --

Creating jobs to rejuvenate the local economy

-- Health Care --

Ensuring access to affordable health care

-- Education --

Rebuilding schools so our children can learn

-- Prevention --

Creating a disaster response system insuring no Americans suffer the failures and incompetence our federal government displayed following Katrina

KATRINA TASK FORCE

Rebuilding and Reviving America's Gulf Coast After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Ensuring All Americans are Protected and Prepared when Disaster Strikes

Levee Reconstruction & Coastal Restoration

Of all of the root causes of the Katrina and Rita tragedies, none is more striking than the failure of the levee system and the role played by Louisiana and Mississippi's disappearing coastal wetlands and barrier islands.

The MARC (*Meeting Authorization Requirements for the Coast*) Act of 2006 addresses these problems by providing for the authorization of integrated hurricane protection and coastal barrier island restoration plans. Construction of levees, floodwalls, locks and gates alone will not protect coastal populations from future storms. But these projects in conjunction with comprehensive coastal and barrier island restoration plans will provide for the necessary level of protection against powerful storms that threaten at the beginning of each summer.

Health Care

A recent article in the *U.S. News and World Report* and an editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* describe the dire situation in New Orleans. A Level I trauma center still does not exist, care is still provided out of tents, there are still bureaucratic delays in getting Charity Hospital rebuilt, the monies in the Deficit Reduction Act will soon run out, and the uncompensated care portion has already expired. The General Accounting Office (GAO) has also undertaken several studies of the health needs as a result of Katrina as well as assessing the response of the Administration to these needs. The Katrina Task Force is working to:

- Partner with state and local officials to determine exact health care needs for the region as they continue to recover from Katrina and Rita.
- Develop a legislative response to address the needs of the recovering health care system in the Gulf Coast that will serve the region well as it rebuilds itself and prepares for future hurricanes.
- Think proactively about best preparing our nation's healthcare system for future catastrophes.

Insurance Coverage

The segmented insurance market leaves gaps in coverage that result in widespread uninsured losses from natural disasters, especially flooding, earthquakes, and other perils commonly excluded by private property insurance. The Katrina Task Force is working to:

- Provide for the availability and affordability of property insurance that would ensure coverage of damages caused by natural disasters.
- Encourage improved risk assessment and mitigation of flood risk and other natural disaster risks.

Housing

Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. First steps have been taken to make housing programs and assistance available for hurricane victims, but there is much to be done. The Katrina Task Force is working to:

- Find solutions to the housing crisis with The Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act (H.R. 4197). Democrats worked bipartisanship last year to include these provisions in the Rural Housing Hurricane Relief bill (H.R. 3895) which passed the House October 2005.
- Strengthen Public Housing Capital Funds, the HOPE VI Community Revitalization program, and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), CDBG Section 108 Loan Guarantee Funds, provide additional tenant-based rental assistance (Section 8) Vouchers, and other measures to address housing needs.
- Ensure adequate assistance and materials in multiple languages in the event of future disaster.